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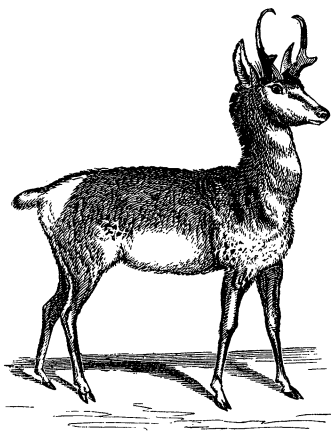
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last geological epoch, the Mastodon, the Irish Elk, the Cave-bear, and all those wonderful animal forms that passed away with the appearance of man?

THE PRONG-HORN ANTELOPE.

BY W. J. HAYS.



THE PRONG-HORN ANTELOPE.
From Tenney's Zoology.

IN a recent number of the NATURALIST is a letter from Dr. Coues on the animals of our Western plains. Among other quadrupeds he describes the *Antilocapra Americana*, or Prong-horn Antelope, and says that they do not shed their horns. It is somewhat strange, that, although this animal has been known so long, so little is known of its habits.

A few years since Professor Baird received a letter from Dr. Canfield, who had spent some years among these animals, announcing the fact the antelope did actually shed its horns.

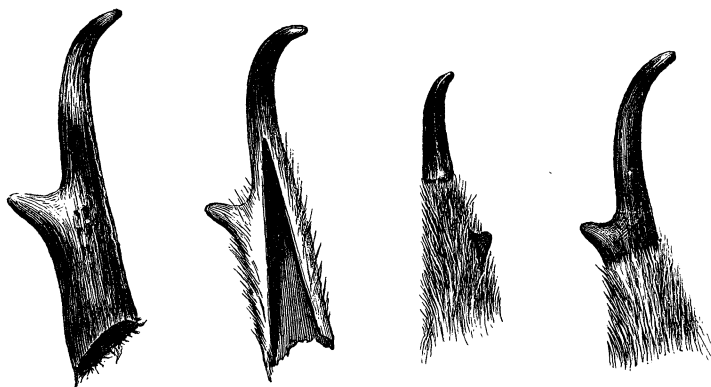
As this animal has always been supposed to belong to that class of ruminants called hollow-horned, the same as the cow, sheep, and goat, Professor Baird looked upon the statement as a delusion of the writer's, and paid no farther attention to the matter, until, in 1865, a young male antelope was taken to the Zoölogical Gardens of London; this was the first animal of the kind ever taken to Europe.

One morning the keeper discovered that one of the horns

was loose, and, supposing that some injury had been done to the animal, he immediately called for Mr. Bartlett, the superintendent of the garden, when, upon further examination, they found that both of the horns were about to fall off. This was the first account published of this interesting fact. The account will be found in the Proceedings of the Zoölogical Society of London for 1865.

For the last four years I have had an antelope under my own observation, and have watched carefully the process of development of the horns.

The antelope fawns are born in the spring, and when six months old the horns first begin to develop. They continue to grow until the next October or November (that is, until



The horn just shed.

A longitudinal section showing the manner in which the hairs pass through the horn.

The appearance of the horn in the month of January.

Its appearance in April.

the animal is eighteen months old), when the first pair of horns are shed; by this is meant the outside shell. Like the cow and sheep there is a horn-core formed by the prolongation of the frontal bone, and occupying about two-thirds of the interior of the horn. When the horn drops off, the horn-core is found covered with a thick skin, and coated with hair, the same as the face of the animal, with a small portion of the tip having already begun to harden; this acting as a wedge, forces the horn off.

Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



THE PRONG-HORN ANTELOPE.

The new horn continues to grow from the tip downwards, and generally to curve inwards; at the same time the thick skin below continues to harden, at first assuming the appearance of black leather. It is flexible, so that the tip may be bent in any direction; a prong sprouts from the base, and, by the middle of summer, the horns are fully developed, to be dropped and again renewed in the autumn.

The horn, when shed, seems to be a mass of agglutinated hairs enclosed by a substance resembling whalebone in appearance; some of the hairs, however, never amalgamating with the horn, but retaining their natural condition, and, passing entirely through the horn, will be found protruding on the inside and outside of the horn.

The animal, from which I have made the drawings, is now developing his fourth pair of horns. The second pair of horns were about three inches longer than the first, and the same difference existed between the second and third pair.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE 3.

Fig. 1. The animal in October, immediately after shedding the horns.

Fig. 2. Appearance in August, the horns being perfect.

DO SNAKES SWALLOW THEIR YOUNG?

BY F. W. PUTNAM.

"WELLSVILLE, N. Y., Sept. 4, 1867.

"EDITORS AMERICAN NATURALIST:

"SIRS, — A short time since I was in Condersport, Pa., in whortleberry time, and a man who had been out berrying stated that he suddenly came across a Rattlesnake with her young, some twenty-six,* about her.

* In regard to the number of snakes in a brood, very little is known. Twenty-six seems to be rather a large number for a Rattlesnake, taking my own observations as a guide, for of two female Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus durissus*) which I dissected, one had nine and the other eight fully formed eggs in the oviducts, though there were a number of small ones (not quite as large as peas) which had probably been impregnated and might have become developed before the others were excluded, but which appeared to